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THE JAPANESE AND THE PACIFIC COAST

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ACCORDING to their year-book of 1746, the Chinese claim that certain of their Buddhist Priests explored the Coast of Mexico, visited the Aztec Empire and crossed into Alaska one thousand years before the time of Cortez. Had these pioneers remained on the Pacific Coast in sufficient numbers they might have raised the cry, in 1849, "the Americans must go."

Perhaps some of the descendants of these early explorers were among those Chinese who were driven from California in 1888. At any rate, to understand the Japanese situation as it exists on the Pacific Coast, and particularly in California, to-day, it seems necessary to go back to the time when Denis Kearney, of the "pick-handle brigade", initiated the active agitation for Chinese exclusion. Prior to the Kearney agitation, Chinese had been coming to the Pacific Coast for years without protest. Supplying a wide variety of cheap and reasonably efficient labor, they were welcomed everywhere and their immigration encouraged. But in the seventies came the formation of the Workingmen's Party which, with Kearney as one of its ardent leaders, adopted the slogan, "the Chinese must go".

As the result of this agitation, Congress, beginning in 1880, passed some sort of exclusion legislation every two years, but not until 1888 was an act passed which satisfied California. The Act of 1888, however, was a *real* exclusion measure, for it not only barred new Chinese laborers from entry to America,

but cancelled all certificates of return held by Chinese residents of the United States who were on their visits to China. Preceding the enactment of this legislation, and as the result of the general agitation that had occurred, many acts of lawless violence had been committed against the Chinese. Street assaults upon them, and the pillaging of their stores and shops, were common practices. Violence bred violence, and before the orgy of race hatred had ended, Chinese were actually burned at the stake in a number of places in California.

The Exclusion Act of 1888 accomplished the desideratum, for through its operation the Chinese actually were forced out and prevented from returning; and into the vacuum created by their removal were drawn the Japanese, who so rapidly accommodated themselves to conditions and so satisfactorily filled the demands for cheap and efficient labor, that they were welcomed to our shores even as the Chinese had been a decade or two earlier. For nearly twenty years this condition prevailed, and there was nothing to indicate that the Japanese, coming here in gradually increasing numbers, were not desired as immigrants. It is true that in 1900 a San Francisco labor leader endeavored to arouse opposition to them, but he was given no support and nothing came of his efforts.

So much for the preliminaries. Now let us take up and discuss, in order, conditions as they exist today in California, Washington and Oregon.

Anti-Japanese agitation, or anti-Japanism as it has been called, is no new or novel thing in California. In 1900 it had first made an appearance but, as has been previously stated, secured nothing in the way of definite results. Not until 1906 did it succeed in arousing any general sentiment hostile to the Japanese. During that year much of San Francisco had been destroyed by earthquake and fire and the few school-rooms in use were greatly overcrowded. Seizing upon this situation as an excuse, certain individuals advanced the demand that separate schools be provided for the Japanese, and withdrew the demand only when President Roosevelt intervened and agreed to endeavor to induce Japan to prohibit new labor immigration to the United States. In this endeavor, the President was

successful, for Japan, through an informal understanding, known as "the Gentlemen's Agreement", promised to prevent the immigration of new laborers to continental United States. This, according to official evidence, she has done, as will be fully recounted later in this article.

With the putting of the Gentlemen's Agreement into operation, anti-Japanism subsided, but in 1913 it came into active life again. This time the demand was for a law prohibiting Japanese from purchasing agricultural land and limiting their leasehold thereof to three years. The Federal Executive, in opposition to the measure, sent Secretary of State Bryan across the continent to Sacramento, but to no purpose, for the bill was enacted into law. With the passage of this law, anti-Japanism again disappeared. All during the late war—while the Japanese fleet was protecting our commerce and other interests by patrolling the Pacific—the most cordial relations existed between the two peoples. But the Armistice had hardly been signed before agitation against the Japanese again manifested itself; however, not until it had been resuscitated and energized by one of California's United States Senators who was soon to be a candidate for reelection, and who has since been defeated at the polls. This Senator, Mr. Phelan, appeared in California early in 1919, and at once made a visit to the Immigration Stations at San Francisco and Los Angeles; whereupon, he issued a statement characterizing the Japanese situation as a menace. Next, he addressed the State Legislature on the Japanese question. Prior to his address, although the Legislature had been in session for almost two months, it had done nothing regarding the Japanese. But a few days afterward, several anti-Japanese measures were introduced and were only defeated through the influence of the Governor who had received and made public a cablegram from Secretary of State Lansing, then in Versailles, stating in effect that passage of legislation antagonistic to the Japanese might embarrass the negotiation of the peace treaty. For thus acceding to the wishes of the Federal Government, the Governor was roundly abused, but nevertheless he refused to recede from his stand. He had already ordered the State Board of Control to investigate thoroughly the Japan-

ese situation in the State, and to all who urged him to call a Special Session of the Legislature to enact anti-Japanese legislation, he replied that the question was of such importance that no solution of its problems should be attempted before a careful investigation had been made, and that such investigation and any subsequent action that might be taken should be kept entirely free from politics.

For reasons known only to themselves, the leaders in the movement against the Japanese refused to await the result and findings of this investigation and proceeded at once to prepare an initiative measure which, as this is written, has just been carried at the polls. By its terms the measure re-affirms the inhibitions of farm land ownership imposed by the law of 1913, and adds a new provision which denies to Japanese the right to lease farm land for any period at all. Also, it forbids them acquiring or holding any stock in a corporation owning farm land, or to act as guardians for their American-born children in any matter in which farm land is involved. Exceedingly drastic as are its terms, the measure was carried by a large majority, though by nowhere near as great a one as its proponents had predicted. However, its passage was not unexpected, for the anti-Japanists, aided by a large part of the State press, conducted a campaign which succeeded in arousing a statewide sentiment intensely hostile to the Japanese, a sentiment which it was impossible for the latter to combat because of the fact that all ordinary avenues of publicity were closed to them. Few of the "arts and practices" of cheap politics and yellow journalism were overlooked by those opposing the Japanese, and inaccuracies and overstatements seemed to be more the rule than the exception. Even while the Congressional Committee on Immigration was in California last summer, trying its best to make a fair and comprehensive investigation of the situation, the anti-Japanists and that part of the press in sympathy with their efforts continued this character of agitation. Sensational charges which were later proved to have been predicated on information and belief were frequent, and that part of the press already alluded to adopted the old practice of "playing up" in glaring headlines all that was unfavorable to the Japanese, and either burying in

the body of the article or omitting altogether anything that favored them. Also, it was guilty of serious inaccuracies, of which the following will provide a sample: When the members of the Immigration Committee visited the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay, newspaper men accompanied them. While there the Committee observed and interrogated a number of "picture brides" who had arrived from Japan the day before. There were exactly ten of these women, as the official record will show and as was known to all the newspaper men present; and yet some of the newspapers gave the number of such "picture brides" as forty, and some as seventy-two. Why the actual number was multiplied by four in some instances and by seven in others, is beyond conjecture, but the public, reading those newspapers and having no other source of information, was further misled. Many other incidents of a like nature could be cited, and a fair observer could not escape the belief that a great deal of the inaccuracy was deliberate. In any event, it is no wonder, to any one familiar with the circumstances, that sentiment against the Japanese has rapidly developed, for the public, depending upon the press for information, has reacted normally to what it has read.

Adverting again to the initiative measure which has just been passed, it would seem that its practical effect will be to drive the Japanese from the land to industry, from the farms to the cities; as most of these people who are now here will remain. Recognising this, labor bodies in Stockton and Sacramento adopted resolutions declaring for fair treatment of all people lawfully in our midst and asserting that they were "opposed to the removal of Orientals from the land to industry". However, other labor organizations endorsed the initiative measure, so that there has been no unanimity in the opinion of labor on this matter. As to what will happen when the Japanese are driven from the soil, the anti-Japanists appear to have no concern. All that they have said in this connection is that American farmers will take the places of the Japanese thus removed, a claim which is vigorously disputed by men who are either large land-owners or otherwise closely in touch with farming conditions. The latter strongly contend that during the last few years Americans have shown

a tendency to abandon farming for occupations less hard and exacting, and that those remaining will not undertake to produce in any substantial way the crops now extensively raised by the Japanese, namely: small fruits, berries, tomatoes, asparagus and all kinds of green vegetables. American farmers, they assert, prefer to raise such crops as corn, barley, oats, wheat, beans, rice, alfalfa etc., which require less arduous labor to produce and are more easily handled. The Japanese, on the other hand, being short of stature, take readily to the kind of labor so necessary to intensive cultivation. Besides, they are accustomed to cultivating small parcels of land, and therefore are best suited for and most successful at this kind of farming. Regarding this phase of the matter, the report of the State Board of Control (*California and the Oriental*) has this to say:

SUDDEN REMOVAL NOT WISE

It is but proper to call attention to the fact that any sudden removal of the Japanese from their present agricultural pursuits in California would affect our food supply very seriously. The annual output of agricultural products by Japanese in 1919, approximating \$67,000,000, consists of food products practically indispensable to the State's daily supply. The Japanese, being a race of short people, seem willing to engage in those lines of agricultural work which call for so-called "squat labor", or the class of "stoop-and-pick labor".

According to the United States census, the Japanese population of California in 1910 was 41,356. Now, according to an estimate of the State Board of Control, it is 87,279. The substantial increase shown is made much of by the anti-Japanists; in fact, it is one of their main arguments. An analysis of these figures shows that most of the increase has been due to Japanese births which, during the last ten years, have amounted to 28,037. Add to this figure the ten or eleven thousand wives (including 5,749 "picture brides") who, since 1911, have arrived to join their husbands, and we find that the increase in Japanese population through *new* male immigration has amounted to only about six thousand for the ten year period. The total population of the State, according to latest census returns, is 3,426,000, which means that there are more than 3,338,000 non-Japanese residents

of California. How that number of people can be "menaced" by 87,000 Japanese, it is very difficult to see.

The high birth rate of the Japanese here has furnished another argument which has been widely advanced by those leading the opposition to the Japanese. They point out that the Japanese percentage of total births has increased from 2.24 in 1910, to 7.82 in 1920, and assert that this portends Japanese "inundation". The thing which they seem to have lost sight of is that the history of all immigration shows that the birth rate of every new immigrant group has been high at first, but that as prosperity and better standards of living have come, the rate declines; and furthermore, that the first movement of a new people to a new land is one, invariably, almost exclusively of males. The Japanese have been no exception to this rule. Prior to 1911, immigrants from Japan to the United States were males almost entirely. Having obtained a foothold and established homes, these men sent to Japan for their wives. Proof of this is found in the immigration figures which show that the percentage of male immigration from Japan to continental United States has decreased from 85.7 in 1910, to 41.5 in 1919. With the coming of these wives, the total of births has increased and the birth rate has risen; but there is no reason to believe that as the ratio of females to males approaches the normal, the birth rate will not fall. In fact, it has already done so in certain sections of the State where normal family life among the Japanese has prevailed for a relatively longer period than elsewhere. In view of such circumstances, it would not seem that California has anything to fear from the Japanese birth rate.

California's total land area is a little more than 98,000,000 acres. Of this, 28,000,000 acres is farm land, of which the Japanese own or are buying upon contract (either individually or through American-Japanese corporations) 74,769 acres; and lease or operate upon crop shares, 383,287 acres. They operate, therefore, about 450,000 acres of farm land out of a total of 28,000,000 acres in the State. However, it cannot be said that they control even this much, for their actual control does not extend to land leased or operated upon crop shares, but only to land owned by them, which is less than 75,000 acres. Considering

these figures—and they are all taken from the report of the State Board of Control—it is hard to believe that Japanese land operation is “menacing” California. There is much good land still uncultivated which, in all probability, will remain so for many years to come.

On the whole, conditions in California do not justify the claims of the anti-Japanists. True, there is widespread sentiment against the Japanese, but it has succeeded—not preceded—political agitation, and in the light of past experience one might safely venture the prediction that if political agitation were to cease, anti-Japanese sentiment would rapidly and practically subside.

No widespread sentiment antagonistic to the Japanese is to be found in the State of Washington. That which does exist is far less bitter than that in California, although there are about as many Japanese, in proportion to the total population of the State, as in California. But there has been no active, systematized agitation against the Japanese and, so far as could be ascertained, no one has tried or is trying to use the Japanese question as a means of securing political office. Furthermore, the press has been fair and impartial. During the recent Hearings of the Immigration Committee in Seattle and Tacoma, the newspapers gave equal space and prominence to matter favoring, or disfavoring, the Japanese. Race prejudice has not been aroused, therefore, to any appreciable extent, and while there are individuals who are opposing the Japanese, they have been decent and tolerant and fair in such opposition and have zealously striven to keep their activities free from politics and from methods calculated to excite racial bitterness.

Still another reason for the present situation is to be found in the attitude of organized labor. Those active in labor circles have encouraged the unionizing of the Japanese as furnishing the most practicable means of preventing undesirable and unhealthy competition. As a result, a considerable number of Japanese have joined American unions, and many others belong to Japanese organizations which prescribe about the same hour and wage scales as prevail in similar trades among American unions. For instance, according to testimony given

to the Immigration Committee, Japanese barbers in Seattle and Tacoma are organized and, with few exceptions, their shops charge the same prices and observe the same hours as regular American barber-shops; and such is true to a large extent respecting Japanese laundries, in many of which a considerable number of other residents work side by side with the Japanese.

As to land matters, Japanese, as individuals, cannot own farm land (except when taken over in foreclosure proceedings), as a Constitutional provision inhibits all alien ownership of such land. (This provision was adopted before the State had a Japanese population of any size and was not, therefore, directed against the Japanese. Also, it applies with equal force to *all* aliens.) Corporations, in which the majority of stock is American-owned and the minority stock is Japanese-owned, have acquired some farm land, but not to any great extent. The law does, however, permit leasing of farm land, and Japanese lease approximately 25,000 acres, which is mostly devoted to truck gardening and berry raising, with some dairying. As far as could be observed, there was nothing like a general complaint concerning the land-leasing situation.

There are many Japanese in the stalls of the public markets, who, for the most part, are either representatives of or directly associated with the Japanese truck gardeners and berry-raisers whose products they sell, and there has been some contention that because of their direct connection with the producer, these Japanese are able to undersell their white competitors. However, this is a condition that can easily be controlled through local regulations.

During the late war, Japanese began to acquire hotels and apartment houses in Seattle and Tacoma, and succeeded in securing quite a substantial number of the smaller ones. It appears, however, that they were unable to operate them profitably, and that many have relinquished such properties after having sustained a material financial loss.

In Seattle there are a good many Japanese grocery stores, and for a time there was considerable complaint concerning them in that by remaining open for longer hours and not closing on Sundays and holidays, they were injuring the business of their

other competitors. However, there is now a movement under way—and apparently succeeding—to prevail upon Japanese grocers to observe the same opening and closing regulations as those established by the Retail Grocers' Association.

As to Japanese population, it is increasing normally; slightly by immigration but mainly through births, and although the birth rate is about the same as in California, there appeared to be no fear of Japanese "inundation". On the whole, public sentiment in Washington is sane and tolerant upon the Japanese question. The situation is not acute and not likely to become so unless, of course, there should be a cessation of the present restrictive immigration policy—a contingency wholly improbable; or a resort to extensive political agitation against the Japanese—of which there is no present indication.

Oregon has had very little anti-Japanese agitation. Once or twice efforts have been made to secure State legislation in opposition to the Japanese, but these have met with little favor and no more support. Consequently, there exists scarcely any sentiment antagonistic to the Japanese. In the State there are less than five thousand Japanese, who own 1,882 acres and lease 7,911 acres of farm land, the law permitting them to own as well as lease. Their holdings are individually small, are not concentrated in any particular community, and in the aggregate are decreasing. There are no farming communities in which Japanese predominate, either as to amount of land owned and operated or as to population, and in the cities there are no "Japanese sections". In view of these facts, Oregon can be said to have no Japanese problem and, unless some totally unlooked-for change occurs, seems likely to have none.

Smuggling of Japanese into America is undoubtedly carried on, though probably not to any very great extent. No nation can control all of its nationals, and some Japanese of the class that, under the Gentlemen's Agreement, would be denied passports, have come into the United States through "underground channels". But there is no evidence that either the Japanese Government or the responsible Japanese in this country have sanctioned or aided them. In fact, by requiring all Japanese leaving South America by steamship to buy "through" tickets

to Japan, the Japanese Government has shown that it is doing everything possible to prevent smuggling. Also, the various Japanese associations in America have coöperated with our authorities to deport Japanese found to be unlawfully here. However, human nature is much the same the world over, and it is quite likely that if a Japanese in Mexico or Canada desired to come to the United States and found the boundary unguarded, he would not hesitate to cross the line. But the very few Japanese in Mexico and Canada appear to be prospering there, so the possibility of any substantial increase of Japanese population in the United States through smuggling is very small.

Though practically unaided by any governmental agency or activity, Americanization of the Japanese is making substantial progress. Credit for this is principally due to the schools and missions of the various Christian churches, of which there are some seventy-five in California alone, which are devoted exclusively to the Japanese. The schools proper are for the children, but most of the missions also maintain men and women workers (Americans) who go among the Japanese families and instruct them in American customs and ideas. Also, in every community where there is a substantial Japanese population, Japanese Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. units have been established, and Japanese Boy Scout companies organized. That the work is bearing fruit is evidenced by the mannerisms, ideas, ideals and general conduct of the Japanese children. A number of American-born Japanese young men and women testified before the Immigration Committee, and it was apparent that they were Americans in the fullest sense of the word.

The part that the Japanese language school has played in Americanization is not generally realized because the public has been led to an entirely erroneous belief concerning the purpose of these schools. Listening to anti-Japanists, it has become imbued with the idea that such schools exist to inculcate in the minds of the Japanese children the ideas and customs of Japan, and to instill into their hearts love for the Japanese Empire. There is no competent evidence that this is the purpose of the schools which, in practice and despite their name, actually aid Americanization and social assimilation, for without them—as

is the case generally with respect to foreign language schools—the connecting tie between parent and child would be dissipated. The parent, in most cases, speaks and understands little or no English, hence his acquaintance with American customs, ideas and ideals must come through the child. The Japanese themselves admit, however, that the usefulness of these schools will not extend beyond the present generation, for by that time the older Japanese (who are the ones that speak and understand so little English) will have died out. Furthermore, the Japanese believe that these schools should be supervised by the State Educational Authorities and are initiating a movement to bring this about. Those in charge of Japanese language schools in northern California held an institute in Fresno, California, recently, and adopted a programme which provides for revised or new text-books, and calls upon the State Department of Education to examine and generally supervise the work of these schools.

Concentration by the Japanese in a given community, commonly called colonization, exists in some parts of California and Washington. It is at once partially responsible for and largely the result of anti-Japanism. Like the old question of the chicken and the egg, it is difficult to determine which came first—the colonization or the anti-Japanese agitation. It is only natural that other residents, under existing conditions, should resent the predominance in any community of the Japanese, or of any other alien race for that matter. They patronize business enterprises conducted by individuals of their own race, and practically their whole economic and social intercourse is confined to themselves. Upon the other hand, with race prejudice extant and anti-Japanism rampant, it is also quite natural that a Japanese should desire to settle among his countrymen. To them he looks for aid and interest, and in that way seeks as far as possible to escape the effect of race prejudice. On the whole, colonization creates a very real and perplexing problem, the solution of which must be honestly and constantly sought after.

As to the possibility of physical assimilation of the Japanese, there is a wide divergence of view. The fact is that thus far nothing very definite or conclusive has been established on either

side of this important question. Interracial marriage has been generally decried and, therefore, has not been practiced to an extent that would furnish a decisive test of its results. The most generally accepted theory has been that the two races will not physically blend, but it is as yet no more than a theory and may be totally disproved in the future. Non-physical, or social and intellectual assimilation, is another matter and, so far as present results are concerned, can be said to be entirely possible. In fact its possibility is definitely established through the American-born Japanese who, in every way, give conclusive evidence of having assimilated the ideas, customs and ideals of America.

By far the most serious charge raised by the anti-Japanists is that Japan "has violated the Gentlemen's Agreement". Let us see if she has. Under the terms of this informal understanding, Japan promised to limit passports to America to the following classes:

1. Former residents
2. Parents, (wives),¹ husbands or children of residents
3. Settled agriculturists
4. Non-laborers; including merchants, teachers, professional men, travellers etc., who, as before, were free to come and go at will.

A little later, Japan, of her own accord and initiative, determined to refuse passports to laborers who sought to go into territory contiguous to continental United States, such as Canada and Mexico.

It can thus be seen that while the agreement did contemplate careful restriction, it did not seek to stop all immigration, hence was not an exclusion act, such as that passed against the Chinese, and never has been so regarded by those adequately informed upon the matter. The trouble is that the public has not been so informed; and has in fact believed the agreement to be some sort of an exclusion arrangement disguised in name to save the pride of Japan. The public has been quite willing, therefore, to believe that Japan has violated the Gentlemen's Agreement. But the facts all point the other way. In all of

¹Wives were not mentioned, it is claimed, in the original discussion of the Gentlemen's Agreement, but were included therein by our own officials when they began to interpret the agreement.

the testimony taken by the Immigration Committee there was no competent evidence of violations of the agreement, and we find the acting Secretary of State, Mr. William Phillips, writing to Senator Phelan under date of August 28, 1919, that "the agreement is working with a fair degree of satisfaction", and that "the authorities who have in charge the administration of the immigration laws have not found that the Japanese Government is violating the agreement." This would seem to be a definite and conclusive refutation of the charge that Japan has violated the agreement, and, coming from such an official source, can of course be relied upon.

However, the Gentlemen's Agreement is by no means all that could be desired, and in theory, at least, is susceptible of serious objection. In the first place, its very informality—the fact that it is not a treaty, is not, in fact, even a written document—invites criticism. In the second place, its enforcement, by the very nature of the agreement, is left entirely to Japan, and however satisfactorily in practice this may have resulted, in theory it excites suspicion and distrust and opens the way for easy accusation of evasions and violations. Without impugning the motives of Japan, or mistrusting her intentions, it must be stated that for the best interest of both nations it would be wise to substitute for the Gentlemen's Agreement a formal treaty, the terms and provisions of which would be definite and certain.

Whether right or wrong in theory, there is no doubt of the practical necessity—for the good of all concerned—of making more rigid the restrictive policy of immigration now embodied in the Gentlemen's Agreement. The fact that in California, particularly, there exists a widespread sentiment of hostility toward the Japanese—no matter what its inspiration, nor whether indeed there is justification for it—renders it impossible, for the present at least, to determine the question of Japanese immigration, with all its ramifications, on its merits. Under the circumstances, the coming of more Japanese will create more agitation. Consequently it is best that for the time being, at any rate, no more Japanese should come. Accepting that as a definitely determined proposition, we must next concern ourselves with doing something which will dissipate the hostile

sentiment directed against those who are already here, and which will be the means of effecting their Americanization. This can only be done by first of all removing the opportunity for political agitation against them, which, of course, means the granting of citizenship to those Japanese now here who, by virtue of length of residence, education and character, can qualify therefor. We cannot reasonably expect to make good citizens of individuals unless we give them the fullest opportunity and encouragement to become such. We cannot reasonably expect the Japanese—or any other alien race—to become real Americans, to develop an abiding devotion to our ideals, a healthy loyalty to our institutions, unless we give them the right to claim and hold those ideals and institutions as their own.

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